

*As the hospital becomes to an increasing degree a community health center, there is a growing awareness of its potentialities for health education. The experience of the Lankenau Hospital's health education program will therefore be of interest to all concerned with the expanding horizons of health service.*

## **LANKENAU HOSPITAL'S COMMUNITY HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM**

*Katheryn E. Langwill, Ph.D., and Edward Hoge Vick, M.D.*

**T**HE MODERN community hospital has a duty beyond being a medical center. While the first goal remains the best possible medical care of the patient, it must consider tomorrow's health through an ever-expanding research program. Beyond these accepted functions lies the field of health education.

Sigerist in 1946 stated it well: "And so we are beginning to see the place that the physician is holding in modern society. We see him as a scientist, educator, and social worker ready to cooperate in teamwork, in close touch with the people he disinterestedly serves, a friend and leader who directs all his efforts toward the promotion of health and prevention of disease, and becomes a therapist when his previous efforts have broken down—the social physician protecting the people and guiding them to a healthier and happier life."<sup>1</sup> The Lankenau Hospital's Health Education Program was designed to fulfill this purpose.

### **Objectives of the Health Education Program**

Briefly stated, these are: (1) to interpret the knowledge of medical science

that people may utilize such information to become and remain healthy; (2) to emphasize the usefulness of periodic health examinations using newer diagnostic aids in detecting incipient disease; and (3) to present the findings of medical scientists in biological perspective to insure continuing support of basic research, medical education, and clinical investigation on the broadest possible base.

### **Methods**

The methods used at the Lankenau Hospital may be listed under the following headings:

#### **Department of Health Education**

General hospital funds support this program which is directed by a full-time specialist in the field. Policy is formulated by this department head in consultation with a committee of the medical staff. The health museum and the auditorium are the chief tools of the director. The Junior League of Philadelphia considered this an important community project and therefore provided volunteers from its membership to staff the museum and assist in promoting the program.

In the auditorium there is a life-size "talking" transparent woman called Pandora, designed to teach anatomy and physiology. During her presentation, Pandora describes the function of each organ of the body as it lights in natural color.

The museum uses three-dimensional animated models and exhibits with moving mechanisms. The exhibits are arranged to tell visually the story of the human body and its functions, "The House You Live in but Once." To make our teaching methods more effective, a script has been prepared which is transmitted by short wave radio so the museum visitor using the "Guide-A-Phone" receiver will hear a description of the exhibit in front of him. The content of this lecture and all material used in the program have been carefully reviewed by our physicians.

For example, when looking at the skin exhibit this is a portion of what one will hear: "Your sense of touch, or senses of touch, since there are several, are found mainly in your skin. But they are also found in your tongue, the lining of your mouth, and the inside of your body. Your first sense of touch is pressure. Other skin sensations are pain, heat, and cold."

The basic scientific facts of human biology, of nutrition, of child, maternal, and dental health are included as well as a series of exhibits on the "Wonders of New Life."

#### Exhibits on Important Disease States and Therapeutic Procedures

The space available in the Health Museum is limited, but the more or less permanent exhibits are flexible enough to allow outstanding educational exhibits from outside sources to be shown from time to time. These rotating exhibits are obtained on loan from other museums, medical societies, or pharmaceutical houses.

#### Familiarization with the Hospital

Harrison, in discussing the human relation problems in a hospital community, has emphasized the fear many patients have in anticipating hospitalization.<sup>2</sup> A frank explanation of hospital procedures does much to allay such apprehension. By means of Kodachrome slides with a sound tape narrative, visitors to Lan-kenau are acquainted with the functioning of the various hospital departments. As one little girl said, "I don't mind having my appendix out. I know just what they do and where I'll be all the time because I've been through the Health Museum and the hospital." This is a portion of what she heard when looking at the playroom: "In the section of the hospital where the children are, there is a playroom with toys and games and even a television set so you can have a good time while you are getting better."

A six-week course for expectant parents has been given for people awaiting their first-born child. Doctors and nurses instruct potential parents in facts of human reproduction, the practical aspects of infant care—and probably more important—discuss the infant's physical and emotional development in the first few months of life. These discussions are reinforced with films on each topic. Our film library is carefully selected.<sup>3</sup> Health and safety topics are screened for content and controlled for viewing age and educational level to obtain maximum value from this medium. Such a film on the accident hazards of the family dwelling—"Mrs. Hazard's House"—emphasizes the physical responsibility of making the home a safe place for the new infant.

#### Public Forums

To familiarize the people of our community with nationally and internationally known scientists and to interpret

the facts of their research for inquiring minds nonscientifically trained, discussions of diabetes, stress, problems of the aging population and of retarded children have been presented in separate sessions about twice yearly. Organizations interested in the continuing crusades against cancer, arthritis and rheumatism, mental illness, heart disease, poliomyelitis, alcoholism, and multiple sclerosis have used the hospital's facilities. The Health Education Department has arranged for a community branch of Alcoholics Anonymous to meet at the hospital weekly.

#### Communications

The hospital has a closed circuit television channel with a television receiver in every room. Patients well enough to view programs emanating from the auditorium can be considered a "captive audience" for these educational or inspirational presentations.

There are two printed communications that are sent to the members of the community. These are "Lankenau" and the Health Museum Newsletter—"Museum Musings." The former is an illustrated quarterly and a potential vehicle for enlisting the broadest possible financial support. Museum Musings was initiated and edited by one of the volunteer workers. This was undertaken to inform these workers about health maintenance technics and concrete problems of providing the best possible museum assistance.

#### Preventive Medicine in the Medical Curriculum

The interest of the physicians heading the Departments of Preventive Medicine of the Schools of Medicine in Philadelphia has spurred those responsible for the community health program of this hospital to crystallize the experience to date for presentation and discussion before small groups of medical students. Sevringhaus in 1953 discussed the prospects of increasing concern of physicians

in community health education during his address on the occasion of the opening of the new Lankenau Hospital.<sup>4</sup>

#### Practical Application to Personal Medical Care

Because thinking physicians are deeply concerned with finding ways and means of providing better medical care at a price the majority of the public can afford to pay, a "Health Examination Service" was created. This service is primarily intended to encourage "well" people to recognize the importance and value of periodic health examinations. Many abnormal physical conditions may be discovered early, thereby increasing the possibility of correction with a minimum of discomfort, expense, and loss of time from daily activities.

This plan is a minimum basic examination for well people. It includes a complete history, physical examination, blood count, urinalysis, serology, blood sugar, electrocardiogram, and chest plate. The service is provided by attending physicians of the Lankenau Hospital staff. If further tests or consultations are recommended, the referring physician and his patient are entirely free to decide where and by whom the additional tests or consultations will be done. This does not carry a complicated consultation and referring technic found in most diagnostic centers. Thus it encourages a continuation of family physician-patient relationship.

#### Results

The number of groups and individuals who have visited the museum and participated in the program are tabulated in Table 1. The program has been in effect since December, 1953, and the analysis by years (hospital fiscal years) indicates increasing interest in the program. "Medical Horizons," a nationally televised series, on January 23, 1956, carried the story of Lankenau under the title of

Table 1

	June 1 Through May 31		
	1954-1955	1955-1956	1956-1957
Total Number of Groups Visiting the Health Museum	201	342	504
Church Groups	24	28	31
Scout Troops	28	63	100
Schools Groups	107	140	176
Miscellaneous Groups	42	111	197
Individuals in These Groups	7,000	12,077	14,485
Individuals Viewing Slides of the Hospital	4,300	8,376	8,197
Individuals Shown Films	3,935	6,917	7,760
Individuals Hearing Pandora's Story	....	5,859 (5mos.)	10,797
Couples in Expectant Parents' Classes	155	238	334
Requests for Speakers	19	31	48

"The Changing Hospital." This was followed by a much greater demand for various aspects of our program.

#### Comparison of the Current Program with Other Efforts in Community Health Education

The present program was modeled after the Cleveland Health Program and Bruno Gebhard, M.D., served as consultant. The results of the Cleveland program were summarized in a recent paper.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately the programs are too dissimilar for useful comparison.

#### Critique of the Program

At the present time these efforts do not lend themselves to a precisely controlled experimental design. The program must be considered as a "pilot plant" operation in a supplementary type of health education.

The Committee on Health Education of the medical staff is aware of the complexities inherent in the evaluation of this program. At the present time methods of assessing levels of awareness of health information are not established. One would like to know in what areas of knowledge the younger segments of our community are deficient, what are the best methods of correcting this deficit,

and what technics would be available to measure the effectiveness of the educational program in these delimited areas. There appears to be a real need for specialists in the social sciences interested in general health education problems of this type. Such specialists need to intensify sociological research aimed at studying the life cycle of the human being in his social environment, and specifically here, the well-being of the individual in relation to his family and the community hospital.

#### Summary

The inevitable position of leadership that befalls a physician in his home community has been presented. The physician's public, not to mention the American people in general, must be educated by example and by demonstration to realize that practices advocated by the present-day physician are in keeping with his mission in life—i.e., to promote and preserve health and to provide the best medical care at the lowest possible price for the well-being of his patients. History has shown that society will dictate the kind of practitioner it will train. It will also dictate the kind of medical care it will accept and pay for willingly. When people are convinced they are receiving the full benefits of improved

medical education, they will support it.

It is our hope that the health education program may provide an opportunity for physicians of our community to be leaders in the promotion of health. A physician must be concerned with more than the care of the sick and injured, he must study health as well as disease, aid in maintaining and supervising health, advise and educate the public by providing the best health and medical care that is available.

Our experience in this effort since December, 1953, has indicated there is a need for this program and the presentations have been appreciated. Over 60,000 people have visited the Health Museum annually. Approximately 25 per cent have come in organized groups to take advantage of programs planned for specific ages and needs. Selected material from prepared tours of certain parts

of the museum, Pandora's story, slide tours of the hospital and its functioning, and health and safety films provide tailored health education programs. Such variety affords our groups a better understanding of their bodies and how to care for them—health through knowledge.

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Dr. Langwill is director of health education and Dr. Vick is chairman, Health Education Committee, Lankenau Hospital, Philadelphia, Pa.